

We assist many constituents who are experiencing problems dealing with the Social Security Administration, including checking the status of applications, collecting missed checks, resolving over/under payments, and providing information on the appeals process. If you have tried to resolve a problem with the Social Security Administration and have run into problems, we may be able to help. You will need to fill out a [privacy release form](#). According to the Privacy Act of 1974, your written permission is required for us to inquire about your situation with any federal agency. Just print it, fill it out, be sure to sign it, and send it to our district office address listed on the form.

**Q: How many people does Social Security cover? How much is the average benefit?**

In 2005, more than 47 million Americans will be covered by Social Security. The average benefit for a retired worker is \$950 a month. Nine out of ten individuals age 65 and older receive Social Security benefits. For nearly two-thirds of retirees, Social Security provides more than half their income. In addition to providing retirement benefits, Social Security is a crucial life and disability insurance program. More than 6 million disabled workers, nearly 5 million widows, and 4 million children receive Social Security benefits.

**Q: How does Social Security work?**

Workers and their employers pay into the Social Security Trust fund through payroll taxes (FICA taxes) and earn guaranteed monthly benefits which are payable to them when they retire or become disabled, or to their surviving spouses or children if the worker dies. Social Security benefits last as long as a retiree lives and are annually adjusted to keep up with inflation.

**Q. Do Members of Congress pay Social Security taxes?**

Every Member of Congress is required by participate in Social Security, without exception. This includes Members of both the House of Representatives and United States Senate. Prior to 1984, neither federal civil service workers nor Members of Congress paid taxes to Social Security, nor were they eligible for Social Security benefits. This changed with the passage of the 1983 Social Security amendments and has been the law ever since. All federal employees hired since 1983 pay into Social Security.